

JOSIAH ROYCE ON SELF AND COMMUNITY

by Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley

Josiah Royce's life-long concern was to explicate adequately the notions of "self" and "community" and their fundamental interdependence.¹ In doing so, he strove to avoid any form of atomistic, reductionistic individualism, on the one hand, and flagrant collectivism, on the other hand. Instead, he argued that the searches for self, for truth, for an ethical, political, or religious ideal must necessarily be both individual and communal enterprises. This argument leads Royce to a number of important philosophical insights too long neglected in both philosophical and scientific circles, but sorely needed after years of domination by Cartesian, Humean, or Existential atomism. Too long has human experience been characterized as a passive, atomistic, and highly individualistic affair; and privacy, guilt, and responsibility have been either ignored or recklessly exalted.² Royce's views on self and community, it will be seen, take us beyond all worn-out dichotomies of mind-body, spiritualism-materialism, freedom-determinism, egoism-altruism, to a refreshing new holistic view.

ROYCE'S THEORY OF SELF

Four important questions about the self are dealt with and answered by Royce, namely: (1) What is a self? (2) How is a self developed? (3) How is the self known? and (4) What gives a self its unique identity? The answers briefly are: (1) The self is a process, not a thing, a process having both a public, physical, and behavioral aspect and a private, inner aspect; (2) the self is developed out of a process of social interaction vis-à-vis a contrast effect; (3) the self is never known directly, but only

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through a communal process of interpretation; and (4) what gives the self its unique identity is an act of will, indeed, an act of love.

The self, for Royce, can never be categorized as a thing, but must always be seen as a process, as developing serially in time. He categorically rejects any Cartesian notion of the self as an independent substance only temporarily embodied and involved with the realm of nature. "Whatever the self is, it is not a Thing. It is not, in Aristotle's sense, . . . a Substance."³ Further, one cannot speak of self as independent of and separate from either nature or body. Royce affirms both the role of genetic and physiological elements in the development of the self and the affinity of human conscious life with nature.

In the second volume of *The World and the Individual*, Royce discusses four characteristics common to both unconscious and conscious nature, namely, tendencies to (1) irreversibility, (2) communication, (3) formation of habits, and (4) evolutionary growth.⁴ All of these, we shall see, are important to Royce's understanding of the self.⁵ Further, Royce puts forth three hypotheses about nature:

(1) The vast contrast which we have been taught to make between material and conscious processes really depends merely upon the accidents of the human point of view. . . .⁶

(2) . . . we have no right whatever to speak of really unconscious Nature, but only of uncommunicative Nature⁷

(3) . . . in the case of Nature in general, as in the case of the particular forms of Nature known as our fellowmen, we are dealing with phenomenal signs of a vast conscious process, whose relation to Time varies vastly, but whose general characteristics are throughout the same.⁸

Whatever difficulties there may be with such a pan-psychic view of reality, it has some merits in light of recent developments in both psychology and philosophy. Unlike Descartes, who saw all the animal kingdom in terms of machines, Royce allows that a study of other conscious organisms may lead to valuable insights about the human self. His view is more consonant with new interest in animal language, intelligence, and rights. It also cautions us against the substantialization we seem to engage in when dealing with mind, brain, or body.⁹

Royce emphasizes not only the continuity of the human self with nature, but also our common-sense experience of an empirical self. "The concept of the human self, like the concept of Nature, comes to us, first, as an empirical concept, founded upon a certain class of experiences."¹⁰ The empirical self is constituted by both public and private experiences. A self is a certain totality of facts. Among such facts are the predomi-

nantly corporeal ones, such as countenance, body, clothing, and physical actions—facts that both the self and others may observe and comment on.¹¹ Royce even acknowledges that if these facts radically changed, so would the self.¹² He also recognizes bodily continuity and the sense of a body as a criterion of self identity, though not the ultimate criterion.¹³

In addition to these public facts there is for Royce a set of inner, private facts of equal empirical status and importance for the self.

In addition to the external or corporeal Self of the phenomenal world, there is the equally empirical and phenomenal Self of the inner life, the series of states of consciousness, the feelings, thoughts, desires, memories, emotions, moods. These again, both my neighbor and myself regard as belonging to me, and as going to make up what I am.¹⁴

Further, as I have pointed out elsewhere,¹⁵ unlike some behaviorists, Royce not only acknowledged consciousness and states of consciousness as important aspects of the self, but he also, before Husserl and other phenomenologists, stressed the intentionality of consciousness. According to Royce, mental acts are always directed toward objects, and also intend the object as having such-and-such meaning, as viewed in such-and-such a way.¹⁶ Early in his career, Royce discussed the role of selective attention in all acts of consciousness. Attention selects only a few from the numerous impressions impinging on our sensibilities; many impressions slip through our consciousness without being retained or having any effect. Attention even modifies the quality of our impressions. Royce concludes his discussion of attention by writing:

Attention seems to defeat, in part, its own object. Bringing something into the field of knowledge seems to be a modifying, if not a transforming process.¹⁷

The intentional nature of consciousness reveals that the self engages in meaning-seeking, meaning-conferring activity. It further suggests that knowledge is obtained by a necessarily communal process. If I see the world from particular points of view, the only way I can transcend my narrowness and subjectivity is by checking things out with my fellows. Objectivity is intersubjectivity. Indeed, for Royce, knowledge both of self and of the external world is grounded in social interaction. Throughout his philosophical career, Royce argued that the self could never be considered a datum, but rather that self-consciousness arises out of a social contrast between the self and the not-self, between what is mine and what is not mine. Royce writes:

I affirm that our empirical self-consciousness, from moment to moment, depends upon a series of contrast effects, whose psychological origin lies in our literal social life, and

whose continuance in our present conscious life, whenever we are alone, is due to habit, to our memory of literal social relations, and to an imaginative idealization of these relations.¹⁸

Royce describes the process of coming to self-consciousness as follows:

Nobody amongst us men comes to self-consciousness, so far as I know, except under the persistent influence of his social fellows. A child in the earlier stages of his social development . . . shows you, as you observe him, a process of development of self-consciousness in which, at every stage, the Self of the child grows and forms itself through Imitation, and through functions that cluster about the Imitation of others, and that are secondary thereto. . . . And his self-consciousness, as it grows, feeds upon social models, so that at every stage of his awakening life his consciousness of the Alter is a step in the advance of his consciousness. His playmates, his nurse, or mother, or the workmen whose occupations he sees, and whose power fascinates him, appeal to his imitativeness and set him copies for his activities. He learns his little arts, and as he does so, he contrasts his own deeds with those of his models, and of other children. *Now contrast is, in our conscious life, the mother of clearness. What the child does instinctively, and without comparison with the deeds of others, may never come to his clear consciousness as his own deeds at all.* What he learns imitatively, and then reproduces, perhaps in joyous obstinacy, as an act that enables him to display himself over against others—this constitutes the beginning of his self-conscious life.¹⁹

Royce does not need to struggle, as do Descartes and Husserl, to explain how we know other minds. We are first with other selves and only later become differentiated, unique selves. Of course, I will see others as conscious actors not only because by observing their acts I become a conscious actor, but also because they aid me in developing my self in new directions.

Our fellows are known to be real and have their own inner life, because they are for each of us the endless treasury of *more ideas*. They answer our questions; they tell us news; they make comments, they pass judgments; they express novel combinations of feelings; they relate to us stories, they argue with us, and take counsel with us. . . . *Our fellows furnish us the constantly needed supplement to our own fragmentary meanings.*²⁰

Further, without my fellows I would have no knowledge of that which we call "external reality." Royce points out that community experience distinguishes inner from outer, the outer world being the world whose presence can be indicated only by definable, communicable experience.²¹ He further notes that spatial definiteness is important to externality because only the definitely localizable in space can be independently verified and agreed upon by a number of socially communicating beings.²² Finally, the data of sight and sound are more reliable because they are most open to social confirmation. We can grasp and see a pole together or lift a weight, but we

cannot literally share smells and tastes.²³ For Royce, our knowledge of the external is fundamentally bound up with our being-with-others.

Our belief in the reality of Nature, when Nature is taken to mean the realm of physical phenomenon known to common sense and to science, is *inseparably bound up with our belief in the existence of our fellow men*. The one belief cannot be understood apart from the other. Whatever the deeper reality behind Nature may turn out to be—our Nature, the realm of matter and of laws with which our science and our popular opinions have to do, is a realm which we conceive as *known or knowable to various men* in precisely the general sense in which we regard it as known or knowable to our private selves. Take away the social factor in our present view of Nature, and you would alter the most essential characters possessed for us, by that physical realm in which we all believe.²⁴

Our selves, then, are essentially social in nature because self develops only in a social context; self-knowledge as well as knowledge of the external world are social affairs. Indeed, for Royce, the self is a community, for the self is in part its memory, its history. Furthermore, in developing self-consciousness, the individual comes to a different level of consciousness, namely, that of idealization. This brings an interesting change.

Hereby the contrast between Ego and Alter, no longer confined to the relations between my literal neighbor and myself, can be refined into the conscious contrasts between present and past self, between my self-critical and my naive Self, between my higher and lower self, or between my conscience and my impulses. My reflective life, as it empirically occurs to me moment to moment, is a sort of abstract and epitome of my whole social life, viewed as to those aspects which I find peculiarly significant. And thus my experience of myself gets a provisional unity.²⁵

Thus, the continuity of the self is a continuity born of community experience and dialogue; a common theme is developed. Indeed, Royce sees self-reflection as interpretation of a self to itself. Suppose I remember a former promise. I am then interpreting this bit of my past self to my future self, and I may say to myself, "I am committed to do thus and so." "In brief," says Royce, "my idea of myself is an interpretation of my past—linked also with an interpretation of my hopes and intentions as to my future."²⁶ My self, then, for Royce, is a series of interpretations—we achieve the unification of separate ideas and experience through interpretation. The self is a temporal, ongoing process, unified by continual communication and reflection. The self continually confers meaning on itself.

This brings us directly to Royce's third base for personal identity and continuity, namely, ethical value. Self is also an expression of purpose. As I am remembered past, I am also an intended future. I set goals and make value judgments about what is worth doing, thinking, and seeking. With

Sartre, Royce sees the self as essentially moral, expressing in words, beliefs, and acts its opinion as to what things ought to be like, including what kinds of persons should be created.

Unlike Sartre, however, Royce does not see atomistic, individualistic selves making their own anxiety-filled, anguished, forlorn decisions. Rather, the self makes its decisions always in a social context. My meaning and plan always are a part of a totality of meanings and plans. Just as I contrast my present self with my past and future selves, so I contrast my plan and ideal with those of others.

*By this meaning of my life-plan, by this possession of an ideal, by this Intent always to remain another than my fellows despite my divinely planned unity with them—by this, and not by possession of any Soul-Substance, I am defined and created a Self.*²⁷

Not only does Royce define the self in terms of purpose and ideal, but also he ties together will and individuality. "I am a Will, a will which is not there for the sake of something else, but which exists solely because it deserves to exist."²⁸ Royce sees individuality in terms of an act of loyalty and love. His emphasis is upon love as a form of exclusive interest that we devote to a being or an object. The love we have for a being makes us declare it unique of its kind, irreplaceable and without any possible equivalent. If a child loves his broken toy soldier, he will not be consoled by a replacement. At the root of love is a spontaneous affirmation, namely, "There shall be no other." "The individual is primarily the object and expression of an exclusive interest, of a determinate selection."²⁹

This means, first of all, that the individual is no mere specification of a universal. It means also that I must choose my ideal, be loyal to it, love it. It means too that the self is primarily a seeker, a self trying to find itself. I learn who I am and who I might be, what interests and capacities I have, what selves I do not want to be because they do not realize my true self. I do this continuously and in contrast to other selves and ideals. For Royce, the journey toward self-discovery and self-achievement is continuous, because individuality can never be achieved by finite experience. He declares individuality to be "a category of satisfied will,"³⁰ but he also makes it clear that in time there is no satisfied will.³¹ In the world of time, seeking differs from attainment, the future is always ahead of us.

The true or metaphysically real Ego of a man . . . is simply the totality of his experience *in so far as* he consciously views this experience, as, in its meaning, the struggling but never completed expression of his coherent plan in life, the changing but never completed partial embodiment of his own ideal.³²

Each self, as a temporal finite being, embodies a limited perspective and thus our meanings, our goals, etc., can only be partial. This is why we must transcend ourselves in community, seeking wider and wider perspectives and broader goals and ideals. Further, to give exclusive love, ultimate commitment, as Paul Tillich has argued, promises infinite fulfillment, but it also involves infinite risk, for we can suffer ultimate disappointment, as did many a Nazi in World War II. The broader and more ultimate our goal, the less chance that we will be disappointed. Thus, in his *Philosophy of Loyalty*, Royce calls us to be loyal to loyalty, to the building of wider and wider and more universal communities.

Further, because we are temporal beings and time moves on, there is a heavy burden involved in being a moral agent, for "the past returns not; the deed once done is never to be recalled; . . . what has been done is at once the world's safest treasure, and its heaviest burden."³³ Royce recognizes, as Sartre does not, that the moral burden cannot be borne by one individual and that atonement for evil deeds must be a communal affair. Individual deeds done and assertions made are irrevocable, but their value can be changed by changing the context, by making the world better and truer by new deeds and assertions. Further, final judgment of one's deeds, one's ideal, need not be made now, for reassessment is possible in the future as the context changes with new deeds and new truths to consider. This is why Royce opts for universal judgment, for a universal community with the total picture, the ultimate vision.

All morality, namely, is from this point of view to be judged by the standards of the Beloved Community, of the ideal Kingdom of Heaven.³⁴

God's love towards the individual is from the Christian point of view a love for one whose destiny it is to be a *member of the Kingdom of Heaven*.³⁵

Ultimately, it is God's love that constitutes my individuality, my uniqueness, for my uniqueness can only be discovered when my relation to the total moral order is clear. In *The Problem of Christianity*, Royce puts it thus:

The World is Community. The World contains its own interpreter. Its processes are infinite in their temporal varieties. But their interpreter, the spirit of this universal community—never absorbing varieties or permitting them to blend—compares and, through a real life, interprets them all.³⁶

This brings us obviously to Royce's notion of community, but first a summary of Royce's theory of self is in order. I shall use P. F. Strawson's suggestion that persons are entities to which certain kinds of predicates apply, and I shall speak of Royce's self as a process to which certain kinds

of predicates apply. They are six in number. First, the Roycean Self is a series of physical experiences, processes, states, and behaviors, so that M-Predicates (predicates describing physical, publicly observable properties) apply to it. Second, the Roycean Self is equally a series of inner experiences, states, and processes—thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc.—so that Strawson's P-Predicates, denoting consciousness, apply to this Self. Third, for Royce, the self is a meaning-seeking, meaning-conferring process, so that I-Predicates are applicable to it, indicating the intentional nature of consciousness, e.g., "I perceive *x* in terms of such and such purposes, and certain interests, choices, and acts of attention." Fourth, Royce sees the self as eminently social in nature, involving awareness of relations to others including their understanding and estimation of us, plus the many exterior functions we perform, roles we play, etc., which partly define us. Appropriate to the self, then, are S-Predicates, indicating the social origin and nature of consciousness, e.g., "I am engaging in such and such a social role in this situation." Fifth, the self is essentially an ethical concept; the self is an ideal, a plan. E-Predicates are needed involving the notions of choice, rights, and responsibilities, e.g., "I judge this act right or wrong, I am guilty and subject to punishment." Finally, as indicated at the end of my discussion of the Self, there is, for Royce, a need for an R-Predicate, indicating a religious dimension to the self, an eternal dimension. This we shall discuss more fully in the section on community. The latter four predicates, added to those of Strawson, indicate the essentially self-transcending nature of the self, the capacity to go beyond the limits of present states of self, to seek new goals, to recall the past and anticipate the future.

ROYCE'S VIEWS OF COMMUNITY

Many have noted that one of Royce's most significant contributions to human thought is his discussion, in *The Problem of Christianity*, of the conditions for the existence of a community. It is important for our present discussion that the first condition is "the power of an individual to extend his life, in ideal fashion, so as to regard it as including past and future events which lie far away in time, and which he does not now personally remember."³⁷ In other words, to have community one must have selves who have given meaning to their own lives, have chosen their own goals, are unique individuals, and are also capable of extending the search for meaning beyond their personal plan. However, the community requires individuals who do not conform to mere social will, but who have developed their own self-will in contrast to the social will. By being truly individual, the self contributes most to the wealth of the community.

The second condition for true community is that there be communication among selves, communication through attentive listening to the ideas and hopes of others. Community is, for Royce, the product of interpretation. Interpretation is a distinctive form of mental activity, a third form of knowledge, in addition to perception and cognition. Interpretation is triadic in character, involving a mediator between two minds. Thus, I am mediating the mind and thought of Royce, accessible through a set of signs contained in his works, to the mind of my hearer or reader. Three items are brought into a determinate relationship by this interpretation: (1) I, the interpreter, who must both understand Royce and know something of my audience; (2) the object, Royce's thought; and (3) a mind to whom the interpretation is addressed. The relationship is non-symmetrical, that is, unevenly arranged with respect to all three of the terms. If the order of the relationship were reversed, it would change the process.

Interpretation is a temporal process; each of the terms of the relation corresponds to the three dimensions of time: past, present, and future. Thus, what Royce wrote in the past I am at present interpreting to you for your future interpretation. The process is irreversible, partial, and ideally infinite. Once I have spoken, what I have said cannot be revoked. But what I have said is not the final word, for there will be future interpretations of Royce, unless, for arbitrary reasons, the process of interpretation is interrupted or permanently stopped.

Interpretation is a social process, creating a community among selves. First of all, in order to interpret Royce to you I had to take my past ideas of Royce, compare them with my present ones, and then achieve a new understanding to convey to you. In achieving a new view, a new union of my ideas, I have thus transcended my past self. This involved an act of will, an act of loyalty, and an element of risk. I had to choose to re-immense myself in Royce's thought, and I committed myself to be loyal to whatever truth I found therein. I had to put beside my ideas those of Royce so that they might interact. And I risked having my ideas changed. Further, in conveying Royce's thought to you now, I risk being told I am wrong, and then the community of interpretation must rectify my error. By attending to my interpretation of Royce, you chose to enter into the community of Royce's interpreters and you may risk having your ideas changed. If the attempt at interpretation is successful, a new meaning will come forth and a new unity of consciousness will be achieved. I will have united your mind with Royce's in a shared understanding.

The crucial elements in interpretation, then, are: (1) Respect and regard for you and Royce as "selves," as dynamos of ideas, purposes, meanings, pursuits; (2) will, the will to interpret, which involves (a) a sense of discontent and dissatisfaction both with partial meanings, a

narrowness of one's own view of things, and with estrangement from others as carriers of meanings and ideas, and (b) an aim to unite selves: "I seek to bring the three of us into the desired unity of interpretation"; and (3) reciprocity and mutuality. There is willingness to play one's part in the interpretive process. The listener to whom the interpretation is addressed must be kindly and sympathetic. What is gained from a process of interpretation is both self-knowledge and community: Self-knowledge, because we re-discover who we are and what our ideas and goals should be by contrasting them with the ideas and ideals of another. Community, because our isolation has been transcended; a new vision and an experiential conspectus have been achieved.

Indeed, Royce's third condition for community is that unity actually be achieved. Each of the individuals involved must share a common past and/or a common future; i.e., it becomes a community of memory and/or a community of hope. Thus, like the self and the process of interpretation that builds it, community is a temporal process; it has a past and it will have a future. As temporal, community is the bringing forth of an embodied ideal; as in the case of a self, this achievement involves deeds done and ends sought. Royce defines a community as a "being that attempts to accomplish something in and through the deeds of its members."³⁸ Like the self, a community is a plan of action.

As the individuality of the self is achieved through an act of will and loyalty, so also community involves the commitment of true selves to a higher goal or ideal they share. The community, like the self, is both communal and individual, both one (guided by one ideal) and many (the individual members). Royce declares, "a community does not become one . . . by virtue of any reduction or melting of these various selves into a single merely present self or into a mass of passing experience."³⁹ In a true community there must be shared understanding and cooperation, a genuine intersubjective interaction and sharing.

This is quite clearly spelled out in six subconditions Royce outlined for the existence of true community. In discussing these I shall draw on the fine paraphrase of these subconditions provided by Frank M. Oppenheim in his article on Royce and community.⁴⁰ The first subcondition is that each individual must direct his own deeds of cooperation. In other words, participation in the community on the part of each member must be fully conscious and fully free. Second, each individual must observe the deeds of his fellow members. Each member of the community must encourage, stimulate, correct, and enjoy the others' acts, just as do members of a really fine orchestra.

Third, each individual must know that without this interacting of co-working selves, the community could not accomplish its aim. There must be mutual appreciation of the efforts of every member and a clear un-

derstanding that only by coordinating efforts can the community achieve its goals. Only by each playing his part and his instrument can a musical composition be performed. Fourth, each must view these present cooperative acts as linked to the community's life and hopes. There must not be exclusive preoccupation with the now, or else stagnation will occur. There must be vision and movement forward. The community must be truly alive, evolving, future oriented.

A fifth subcondition of community is that each self identify his own life with the ongoing common life of the community. Each self must share the goals of the community as its own goals. Finally, other selves in the community must concur in accepting each self as a fellow member of the community.

The conditions and subconditions of community are presented by Royce as ideals that may or may not be realized on earth. Royce is fully aware of the realities of actual human life and communal living. This is evidenced in at least two ways. First, in *The Problem of Christianity*, Royce provides a careful analysis of how highly cultivated societies train their members both in individualism and collectivism.⁴¹ The individual gains self-consciousness by opposing his will to the social will, while the social will inflames self-will. The socially trained individual is taught not only to value his own will by opposition to the collective will, but also to respect the collective will. This respect appears paradoxical, for it hurts those who oppose it and helps those who control it. Collectivism, by training the individual to pride himself on his own will, at the same time trains this self in collectivism. "*Individualism and collectivism are tendencies, each of which, as our social order grows, intensifies the other.*"⁴²

A second evidence of Royce's awareness of the realities of community life is his understanding of human egoism, a view he often discussed. Royce was well aware that community and common consciousness were hard to come by in the midst of social alienation. He was very much cognizant of original sin, expressed in the tendency to isolation and in proneness to betray our ideals.

The failure to sound to the depths the original sin of man, the social animal and of the natural social order he creates—such failure, I repeat, lies at the basis of countless misinterpretations, both of our modern social problems, and of the nature of a true community, and of the conditions which make possible any wider philosophical generalization of the idea of community.⁴³

An even further indication of Royce's understanding of the hard realities of community life is his analysis, in *War and Insurance*,⁴⁴ of what he called an "essentially dangerous community," namely, any social

situation in which only two persons are involved. Between such "dangerous pairs" as borrower and lender, plaintiff and defendant, there must step a third party, an interpreter, to reconcile and mediate the interests of the pair.⁴⁵

If these are the realities of life, how then can individuals, so prone to the narrowing of consciousness, ever achieve the kind of extension of self required for true community? This can happen only through love, through the yearning for unity with other selves. Even though this goal may seem unattainable, the will must postulate the wholeness in which true individuality achieves its meaning.

Therefore our ideal extensions of the self, when we love the community, and long to realize its life with intimacy, must needs take the form of *acting as if we could survey*, in some single unity of insight, that wealth and variety of connection which, as a fact, we cannot make present to our momentary view.⁴⁶

The love that Royce has in mind never loses sight of the individuality and special calling of each member of the community, and it sees the successful cooperation of all its members bringing about that which the individual member most eagerly loves as his own fulfillment.⁴⁷ To illustrate the unity sought in community and the love needed, Royce draws upon our human experience of love.

Think of the *closest* unity of human souls that you know. Then conceive of the Kingdom in terms of such love. When friends really join hands and hearts and lives, it is not the mere collection of sundered organisms and of divided feelings and will that these friends view their life. Their life, as friends, is the unity which, while above their own level, wins them to itself and gives them meaning.⁴⁸

Such love Royce recognizes as something more than human. "The problem of love is human. The solution of the problem, if it comes at all, will be, in its meaning, superhuman and divine, if there be anything divine."⁴⁹ Royce, then, as we have already partially seen, has added one more dimension to the self and to community, namely, the eternal.

Royce discusses the concept of the eternal in a number of contexts.⁵⁰ In many places he describes it in terms of the *total simul*, the all-at-once vision of the Absolute in which the whole picture is given, each individual life plan and ideal uniquely and mutually contrasting with each other ideal. Thus, Royce writes:

Never in the present life do we find the Self as a given and realized fact. It is for us an ideal. Its true place is in the eternal world, where all plans are fulfilled. In God alone do we fully come to know ourselves. There alone do we know even as we are known.⁵¹

There is another sense of the eternal that I believe has support in Royce's thought. It is the sense of loyalty to the eternal in working continuously to transcend selfish, partial individualism, to seek broader truth, broader selves, broader community. The work of interpretation asks us to transcend all stopping places, all dyadic relations, all dangerous dualisms that bind us to partial views: materialism versus spiritualism, individualism versus collectivism, egoism versus utilitarianism. That such a commitment to the eternal is crucial to Royce's view of the self and community is evident in his writings. The moral self and the moral community, he claims, are committed to making the world ever better.

The best world for a moral agent is one that needs him to make it better. The purely metaphysical consciousness, in vain, therefore, says of the good, *It is*. The moral consciousness insists upon setting higher than every such assertion, the resolve, *Let it be*. The moral consciousness declines to accept, therefore, any metaphysical finality. It rejects every static world.⁵²

The scientific community, which Royce constantly cites as an example of true community, is endlessly committed to newer and broader truth, "The very existence of natural science, then, is an illustration of our thesis that the universe is endlessly engaged in the spiritual task of interpreting its own life."⁵³ And even in the area of religion, Royce concludes, "We can look forward, then, to no final form either of Christianity or of any special religion. But we can look forward to a time when the work and the insight of religion can become as progressive as is now the work of science."⁵⁴

The eternal is a necessary part of our search for self and community because it provides the sense of the total vision in which all true individuality is achieved. That sense urges the will to continual self-transcendence so that no final stopping point is arbitrarily set and no final judgment is prematurely made.

CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE OF ROYCE'S VIEWS ON SELF AND COMMUNITY

In explicating Royce's views on self and community, I have limited myself to interpretation. I am aware that there are aspects of Royce's philosophy that have been considered obscure or to which some objections can be made. Rather than engage in such a clarifying or critical project here, I will point to certain insights of Royce's that I believe can not only survive criticism, but also furnish illumination for perplexing philosophical problems of the present time.

It is my conviction that Royce's view of both self and community provides a healthy corrective, first, to the atomic individualism of the Existentialist school with its notion of an individual self that is what it is

in self-contained, independent existence. Such a view makes a travesty of relationships with other selves, for all forms of togetherness of selves become accidental and external, because relations with other selves constitute no essential part of the self that is related. All forms of community, then, become mere collectivism, threatening the individuality of selves. Further, the existential self is a lonely, forlorn, anxious self; although other selves are unimportant to the project of self-achievement, they are always there ready to judge us in our success or failure. Recall Sartre's classic line in *No Exit*, "Hell is—other people."⁵⁵

Royce, in his understanding of the self as purpose and ideal, surely would find himself in harmony with contemporary attempts to identify the individual person with freedom—even sin, for Royce, is an act of free choice. "To sin is to *consciously choose to forget*, through a narrowing of the field of attention, an Ought that one already recognizes."⁵⁶ However, Royce recognizes that absolute freedom is a concept with burdensome and dangerous consequences. If a self *is* only its freedom, it has nothing outside itself that might qualify, direct, and give meaning to its freedom. There is nothing to urge the self on to self-transcendence, something that Royce recognizes as necessary to self-development. To Sartre Royce would probably say,

the Self seems to stand within its own realm, as a sort of absolute authority, over against any external will or knowledge that pretends to determine its own nature, or its precise limits, or its meaning. . . . It is thus a separate entity, in its essence unapproachable . . . possessing perhaps its own unalienable rights, the unit of all ethical order, the centre of its own universe . . . the principal problem for any such realistic Individualism, always becomes the question of how this Self, whose interests are essentially its own, can rationally come to recognize any responsibility to other Selves or to God, or to any Absolute Ought beyond its own caprice.⁵⁷

Further, Royce sees that the moral burden is too great for one individual. First of all, once a deed has been done, it is irrevocable—as Sartre, in *No Exit*, makes so vividly clear—"I am, and to the end of endless time shall remain, the doer of that willfully traitorous deed. Whatever other value I may get, that value I retain forever. My guilt is as enduring as time."⁵⁸

Second, usually the deed hurts others; the community is involved and even the community cannot undo an irrevocable fact of evil that has been perpetrated. But the community can bring the doer back into communal relation, and new creative acts done by others in the community can make the world better than it was before the blow of treason fell.⁵⁹ For Royce, guilt and responsibility make sense and can be borne only in a communal context. Hell is not necessarily other people; rather, loyalty to a community, particularly to the principle of community itself, is a way to

salvation, a way to transcend the narrowness of vision that leads to sinful acts, a way to a better, more universal world.

All morality, namely, is, from this point of view, to be judged by the standards of the Beloved Community, of the ideal Kingdom of Heaven. Concretely stated, this means that you are to test every course of action *not* by the question: What can we find in the parables or in the Sermon on the Mount. . . . The central doctrine of the Master was: "So act so that the Kingdom of Heaven may come." This means: So act as to help, however you can, and whenever you can, towards making mankind one loving brotherhood, whose love is not a mere affection for morally detached individuals, but a love of the unity of its own life upon its own divine level, and a love of individuals in so far as they can be raised to communion with this spiritual community itself.⁶⁰

Royce's assertion is that there is no contradiction between being a unique individual and finding oneself involved in a loyal and cooperative effort with many individuals. This is a needed corrective to the notion of the self as a pure project of freedom and to any call for boot-strap individualism. In a time when the world is becoming highly complex and interdependent, such a call addressed exclusively to the individual is futile and even dangerous—as current events in Iran and elsewhere tell us.

Royce's emphasis on community and his call for a philosophical understanding of community are especially important in an increasingly interdependent world. To deal with dangerous conflicts, the interpretive, mediating process of community building advocated by Royce needs to be explored in depth by both philosophers and social scientists. True types of community need to be distinguished from dangerous, false communities, such as those exhibited in fanatical religions and cults in which the interaction and growth of selves are not genuine. Questions concerning the size of communities and their interrelations need to be discussed and explored with new vigor.

Royce can be seen as a bridge builder between two contemporary and competing approaches to the study of community in the social sciences. Either *individualism*, which views society as merely a collection of individuals and its every property as a resultant or aggregation of properties of its members, or *holism*, which views society as a totality transcending its membership and as endowed with properties that cannot be traced back either to the properties of its members or to their interactions, have dominated contemporary sociology. It is refreshing to see Mario Bunge advocate a new system, which appears very Roycean in spirit and understanding, namely, the view that "a society is a system of interrelated individuals, i.e., a system, and while some of its properties are aggregations of properties of its components, others derive from the relationships among the latter."⁶¹

Royce's attempt to combine creatively the twin aspects of individual-community, freedom-order, is equally a corrective to the dominant reductionism of the behaviorists, who would reduce self to the external conditions of existence, or of the identity-theory materialists, who would explain behavior in terms of brain states. As we have seen, Royce fully recognizes the role of genetic, physiological, and behavioral components in the development of self. Royce's self is both embodied and part of its environment. However, he acknowledges both the role of inner, conscious states in determining human behavior and the intentionality of consciousness. Both have been denied by the behaviorists. Psychologists Walter and Harriet Mischel succinctly describe the inadequacy of the behaviorist view:

B. F. Skinner (1974) and other radical behaviorists make a point of avoiding "pseudo-explanations" by refusing to invoke either the self or the person as a causal agent. Instead they attribute the "control" (cause) of behavior, including the behaviors in "self-control," to the individual's environmental and genetic history. Such an extreme emphasis on the environment successfully avoids animism and "ghosts," but it does so at considerable costs. It ignores the ways in which the individual *transforms* the environment psychologically, processing information about events selectively and constructively in light of his or her own psychological state, monitoring his own behavior and intervening actively between the impinging stimulus and the response that is ultimately generated. It also ignores the fact that behavior reflects a continuous *interaction* between person and conditions rather than a one-way influence process in which the environment molds the person.⁶²

We have already noted how, early in his philosophical career, Royce had argued against any form of pure empiricism and had talked of the transforming that the self performs on the given:

the present datum means something to us, implies something, leads over to a deed of some sort, arouses a response, sets us at the business of idealizing its contents. And we proceed to idealize these contents by giving them a place in our attention only in case it somehow cooperates in our business of defining our own purposes as thinkers who conceive the world as a system.⁶³

Royce further recognized that to deny the self-constructive features of human experience is to contribute to the lack of critical reflection on the nature of the scientific enterprise itself. The scientist-in-action is a creative knower, an interpreter and selector of data. Observation is a highly selective process, data collection is always guided by a hypothesis; theory and observation are closely intertwined. Royce was well aware of this long before Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and Husserl's *The Crisis of the European Sciences*.⁶⁴ In his study of science, Royce had concluded that one must fully recognize both the interpretive nature of human consciousness and the fact that science is a human endeavor with

certain guiding ideals and purposes as well as with the very real stubbornness of facts.

We report facts; we let the facts speak; but, we, as we investigate, in the popular phrase, "talk-back" to the facts. We interpret as well as report. Man is not merely made for science, but science is made for man. It expresses his deepest intellectual needs, as well as his careful observations. It is an effort to bring internal meanings into harmony with external verifications. It attempts to control as well as to submit, to conceive with rational unity, as well as to accept data. . . . The theories of science are human, as well as objective, internally rational, as well as (when that is possible) subject to external tests.⁶⁵

Further, returning to the self-controlling, transforming features of human experience cited by the Mischels and always affirmed by Royce, it must be clear that to deny such features is to deny human responsibility and the ethical and valuational aspects of human life. This denial is clearly seen in a number of B. F. Skinner's writings. The travesty this denial makes of ethical judgment is well established by Brand Blanshard in a printed debate between him and Skinner.

"We cannot make men stop killing each other," says Professor Skinner, "by changing their feelings." Why educate their feelings at all, one wonders, if not even the hatred of a Hitler or the jealousy of an Othello can make the slightest difference in what they do? It seems equally pointless to educate men to reflect, for the foresight of the consequences of their conduct can never affect that conduct. Indeed, it is hard to see why, in a behaviorist world, any consequences should be better than any other. Why should I not impose suffering on others if it is only a mentalistic unreality? Fortunately, Professor Skinner is so unreasonable a behaviorist as to be a kindly and considerate man.⁶⁶

The denial of the value dimension of human experience that is a consequence of a strict behaviorism is a dangerous thing in an age when scientists are being forced to deal more and more with value questions arising out of scientific inquiry itself. Who, for example, will decide how widely and which behavior modification techniques should be used, including such techniques as psycho-surgery and electrical stimulation of the brain?

Royce's view that the self is essentially an ethical concept is sorely needed today, as is his view of science as a community of interpretation, loyal to the never-ending search for truth and never content to rest with one final answer. In contrast to reductionistic atomism and existentialist individualism, Royce asserts that it is arrogant to say either that the self has no meaning or that it alone creates itself. Self and community arise in a mutually creating, ongoing, infinite process. To claim to understand fully either self or community in mutual isolation or as creating one another is to pick an arbitrary stopping place in the interpretation process. Let me end

this interpretation of Royce and of his significance for today with his own words:

the philosopher's work is not lost when, in one sense, his system seems to have been refuted by death and when time seems to have scattered to scorn the words of his dust-filled mouth. His immediate end may have been unattained; but thousands of years may not be long enough to develop for humanity the full significance of his reflective thought.⁶⁷

NOTES

1. I wish to acknowledge other attempts to explicate Royce's views on self and community: James Harry Cotton, *Royce on the Human Self* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1945); John E. Smith, *Royce's Social Infinite: The Community of Interpretation* (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1950); Bhagwan B. Singh, *The Self and the World in the Philosophy of Josiah Royce* (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1973); Mary Briody Mahowald, *An Idealistic Pragmatism* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972). See also: David L. Miller, "Josiah Royce and George H. Mead on the Nature of the Self," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, Summer 1975, pp. 67-89; William Gavin, "Royce and Khomayakov on Community as Process," *Studies in Soviet Thought* 15 (1975):119-128; Robert A. McDermott, "The Absolute as a Heuristic Device: Josiah Royce and Sri Aurobindo," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 18 (June 1978): 171-199; John E. Smith, "The Contemporary Significance of Royce, Theory of the Self," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 21 (1967):77-89; Frank M. Oppenheim, "A Roycean Road to Community," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 10 (Sept. 1970):341-377; M. L. Briody, "Community in Royce. An Interpretation," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 5 (1969):1224-1242; Peter Fuss, "Interpretation: Towards a Roycean Political Philosophy," *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 21 (1967):120-131; James Collins, "Josiah Royce: Analyst of Religion as Community," in *American Philosophy for the Future: Essays for a New Generation*, ed. Michael Novak (New York: Scribner's, 1968), pp. 193-218.

2. It is my judgment that the notion of human experience as passive, atomic, and individualistic is a crucial concept for such diverse schools as the behaviorists, the logical positivists, and the empiricists, for the language analysts and even the identity-central state materialists. All of these schools have been dominant in scientific and philosophical schools until fairly recently. Even such a corrective as phenomenology has not always escaped this notion of human experience—although Husserl emphasizes the active, intentional nature of human consciousness, he struggles unsuccessfully with solipsism. Existentialism, even though it exalts freedom and ethical responsibility, does so somewhat recklessly.

3. Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual* (New York: Second Series, Dover Publication, 1959), p. 268.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-224.

5. In the body of this paper I do not discuss the role of habit in the formation of self, except indirectly. Habit is crucial to self-development because it is that which allows individuality and consciousness to develop; e.g., it is an essential part of the imitative process. Further, as David Miller has noted in his article, "Josiah Royce and George H. Mead on the Nature of the Self," p. 77, Royce would agree with Mead's assertion that institutions consist of "habits of behavior that are shared and approved by members of a community." See Royce's discussion of the interaction of self-will and social will in *The Problem of Christianity* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 140-159. See

also his discussion of imitation in *The World and the Individual*, pp. 309-315. It is thus in light of this discussion that I would argue that George Herbert Mead was wrong to conclude that Royce's notion of imitation was a "mechanistic interpretation of the social process," which ignored "the teleological factor involved in each process of adjustment." Royce discusses imitation in terms of adjustment, habits, and new behavior, never in terms of repetition. See David L. Miller, "Josiah Royce and George H. Mead," pp. 75-77.

6. Royce, *The World and the Individual*, p. 224.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 225.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

9. This is evident, for example, in the attempt by many neurophysiologists to coordinate bits of behavior with bits of brain; e.g., to locate aggressive behavior in such and such an area of the amygdala. The work of Jose Delgado on electrical stimulation is a good example of both atomization and substantialization. See Jose Delgado, *The Physical Control of the Mind* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

10. Royce, *The World and the Individual*, p. 256.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

12. *Ibid.*

13. In *The World and the Individual*, Royce writes: "Always the contents which constitute the Ego, at the very moment of their contrast with the remaining contents present during the social contrast-effect, have been associated with certain relatively warm and enduring organic sensations, viz. sensations coming from within our own bodies" (p. 264). Because Royce does acknowledge the role of body in self-identity, the obvious question of personal survival after death arises. For Royce's discussion of this question, see *ibid.*, pp. 436-445.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

15. Jacquelyn Ann Kegley, "Royce and Husserl: Some Parallels and Food for Thought," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 14 (Summer 1978):184-199.

16. Thus, for example, a piece of land may be viewed differently by an artist, a real estate salesman, a farmer, a homeowner, and a mystic.

17. Josiah Royce, *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1885), p. 314.

18. Royce, *The World and the Individual*, p. 260.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 261-262. Italics are Royce's.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 171-172. Italics are Royce's.

21. The outer world is "the world whose presence can only be indicated to you by your definable, communicable experience." See Josiah Royce, "The External World and the Social Consciousness," *The Philosophical Review* 3, No. 5 (September 1904):520.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 519.

23. In *The World and the Individual*, vol. II, Royce writes: "Therefore, as only the definably localizable in space can be independently verified and agreed upon by a number of socially communicating beings, and as only what all can agree upon can stand the social test of externality, the principle that what is for all must, if in space at all, occupy a definite size and boundaries, becomes a relatively *a priori* principle for all the things of the verifiable external world" (p. 179).

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 171-172. Italics are Royce's.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 265.

26. Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. II, p. 42.

27. *The World and the Individual*, vol. II, p. 276. Italics are Royce's.

28. Josiah Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1896), p. 253.

29. *The World and the Individual*, vol. I, p. 460.

30. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 432.

31. "But that in Time there is, for the will, no conscious satisfaction, is a thesis that, according to our view, is the necessary correlative of the thesis that Time is the form of the Will." *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 381.

32. Josiah Royce, *The Conception of God* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1898) The Supplementary Essay, p. 291.

33. *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. II, p. 157.

34. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 356.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 342.

36. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 324.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 64. Indeed, for Royce, a community is a self writ large. Thus Royce writes: "We can compare a highly developed community, such as a state, either to the soul of a man or to a living animal. A community is not a mere collection of individuals. It is a sort of live unit, that has organs, as the body of an individual has organs. A community grows or decays, is healthy or diseased, is young or aged, much as any individual member of the community possesses such characters. Each of the two, the community or the individual member, is as much a live character as is the other. Not only does the community live, it has a mind of its own—a mind whose psychology is not the same as the psychology of an individual human being."

39. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

40. "A Roycean Road to Community," p. 363.

41. *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. I, pp. 127-155.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

44. Josiah Royce, *War and Insurance* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1914), pp. 30-35 *et passim*.

45. For an extended discussion of Royce's notion of dangerous pairs and its relevance to contemporary realities, see Jacquelyn A. Kegley, Barbara McKinnon, and Eugene Mayers, eds., *Theory of Community in the Philosophies of Royce and Hocking* (Hayward: California State University Press, 1979). See especially John E. Smith, "Josiah Royce's Doctrine of Interpretation: Building Community Out of Conflict," pp. 60-75; Garry G. Mathiason, "The Application of Royce's Doctrine of Interpretation to Collective Bargaining in the Public Sector," pp. 75-86; Fred J. Hiestand, "Royce's Views and Medical Malpractice," pp. 86-90; and William M. Roth, "Royce and Current Ecological Issues," pp. 90-97.

46. *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. II, pp. 102-103.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

48. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 351.

49. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 102.

50. See Lecture III, "The Temporal and the Eternal," in *The World and the Individual*, vol. II, pp. 111-151. There Royce writes: "I declare that this same temporal world is, when regarded in its wholeness, an Eternal Order. And I mean by this assertion nothing whatever but that the whole real content of this temporal order, whether it is viewed from any one temporal instant as past or as present or as future, is *at once* known, i.e., is consciously experienced as a whole by the Absolute" (p. 138).

51. *Ibid.*, p. 290.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 340.

53. *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. II, p. 418.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 432.

55. Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit and The Flies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p. 61.
56. *The World and the Individual*, vol. II, p. 358.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283.
58. *The Problem of Christianity*, vol. I, pp. 260-261.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 307-308.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 356-357.
61. Mario Bunge, "A System's Concept of Society: Beyond Individualism and Holism," *Theory and Decision* 10 (1979):13-14.
62. Walter Mischel and Harriet N. Mischel, "Self-Control and the Self," in Walter Mischel, ed., *Cognitive Development and Epistemology* (New York: Academic Press, 1971), pp. 55-56.
63. Josiah Royce, "Columbia Lectures," Unpublished Papers, Folio 74, No. 5 (1910), pp. 52-53.
64. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, 1970); and Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1970), originally published as *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente phänomenologische Philosophie* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1954).
65. Josiah Royce, Introduction to H. Poincaré, *Foundations of Science*, trans. G. B. Halsted (New York: The Science Press, 1913). Reprinted in *Royce's Logical Essays*, D. S. Robinson, ed., pp. 268-284. My citation is from the reprint, pp. 279-280.
66. Brand Blanshard and B. F. Skinner, "The Problem of Consciousness—A Debate," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 27 (1966-67):563.
67. Josiah Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1892), p. 10.